

REMARKS

With this Amendment, Applicants cancel claim 7 and add new claim 14. Therefore, claims 1-6 and 8-14 are all the claims currently pending in this Application.

Information Disclosure Statement

With the current Office Action, the Examiner returns a signed copy of the Substitute Form 1449 A & B submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement of April 9, 2004. However, the Examiner has failed to initial the references listed therein. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner return an additional signed and initialed copy of this form with the next Office communication.

Claim Amendments and Cancellations

Claims 1 and 10 are amended in order more fully to cover various aspects of Applicants' invention as disclosed in the specification. Claim 6 is amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 7, and claim 8 is amended to depend from claim 6. Claim 7 is cancelled.

Claim Rejections

Claims 10 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly unpatentable over Crosby (U.S. Patent 6,840,617). Claims 1, 2, and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Otsuki (U.S. Patent 6,746,101) and Kida (U.S. Patent 6,659,603). Claims 3 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Otsuki, Kida, and Crosby. Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Crosby, Meyer '817 (U.S. Patent 6,239,817), and Meyer '467 (U.S. Patent 5,276,467). Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over

Crosby, Meyer '817, Meyer '467, and Otsuki. Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Crosby, Meyer '817, Meyer '467, and Matcuhashi (U.S. Patent 5,997,129). Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Crosby and Kida. Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Crosby and Meyer '817. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Claims 1-5 and 10-13. As amended, claims 1 and 10 recite: “a wall disposed upstream in the feeding direction of the most upstream one of said plurality of liquid ejection areas, said wall guiding the recording material to said plurality of liquid ejection areas.” Applicants submit that this limitations is not taught or suggested in any of the cited references either alone or in combination.

Additionally, Applicants note the following exemplary advantages of the claimed wall. A recording material transferred from upstream of the liquid ejection area by the first transfer roller is weighed down by itself due to gravity. Therefore, the recording material may be transferred to an incorrect area (e.g. the area below a support member). However, according to the exemplary embodiment recited in claims 1 and 10, the recording material is guided by the upper surface of the wall and correctly transferred to the liquid ejection area.

Therefore, Applicants submit that claims 1 and 10 are patentable over any reasonable combination of the cited references and submit that claims 2-5 and 11-13 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependence.

Claims 6, 8, and 9. Applicants submit that none of the cited references teaches or suggests a downstream sub-nozzle array, as recited. Regarding this limitation, the Examiner refers to a nozzle vernier pattern on an aperture plate in Figure 13 of Meyer '467. However,

Applicants submit that the vernier pattern is not a nozzle array, but rather a vernier for adjusting a printing position. Additionally, Meyer '467 teaches away from the present invention. In particular, Meyer '467 teaches that a black printing cartridge, which may correspond to the sub-nozzle array in the present invention, *should not be aligned with the yellow cartridge which is the most downstream of the cyan, magenta, and yellow cartridges*, as discussed in Meyer '467 at col. 6, lines 14-33.

In contrast, in the present invention, the downstream sub-nozzle array is provided as substantially the same position in the feeding direction as the one of the main nozzle arrays in the most downstream position.

Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 6 is patentable over the cited combinations of references and submit that claims 8 and 9 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependence.

Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 1-6 and 8-13 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 10/821,245

Q80974

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Laura Moskowitz
Registration No. 55,470

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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